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CounterPunch

$2.50

MARCH 16-31, 2000 *Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair* **VOL. 7, NO. 6**

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TEACHING KIDS TO SNITCH

BY JIM REDDEN

In the fall of 1999, millions of American children returned to public schools that were radically different than the ones they left just three months earlier. Gone were the open campuses and casual dress codes. During the summer break, thousands of schools across the country installed video surveillance cameras in their hallways and classrooms. Students were required to wear plastic identification cards, complete with their names, photographs and social security numbers. And new zero-tolerance policies threatened swift punishment for common playground behavior.The changes were the result of the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

By the beginning of the new school year, students across the country were routinely being suspended or expelled for things which had previously been considered no big deal. Shoving matches were treated like criminal assaults. Nail clippers were viewed as deadly weapons, art projects as dangerous threats. Even straight-A students were being thrown out of school for minor offenses. Most of these students were punished after being turned in to school authorities by their classmates. Now the private sector is getting into the act, using advanced marketing techniques to urge even more snitching.

In February of this year, the Pinkerton Services Group began test-marketing an "informant program" for the public schools. The company, a division of the world's largest private security company, is currently test marketing the program in the North Carolina public school system. The company plans to offer the program across the nation in the near future. The name of the program is WAVE America, with WAVE standing for Working Against Violence Everywhere. It is one of those public-private partnership which politicians like to embrace these days. Although PSG owns and operates the program, it was developed at the urging of North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt in cooperation with the state's Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Center for the Prevention of School Violence, a state-funded think tank. Although the Governor's Crime Commission kicked in $200,000 to start the program, all operating costs are being picked up by corporate sponsors recruited by PSG.

The heart of the program is a 24-hour toll-free phone line staffed by specially-trained PSG "communication specialists". Children, parents and teachers are encouraged to call the line to report students who are breaking the law, violating school rules or exhibiting violent behavior. But that's just the start. The website is also a cybersnitch, accepting tips and transmitting them via e-mail to the PSG phone operators. Program administrators stress that the line can alert education and law enforcement authorities to such life-threatening situations as students bringing guns and bombs to school-a goal which no one can question. But program materials prepared by PSG also urge students, parents and teachers to report a broad range of other, far less threatening activities. Classified as "early warning signs" of violence, they include such common adolescence behavior as "social withdrawal".

In addition, the PSG-prepared material urges people to report such politically-loaded behavior as "intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes". And if such categories aren't broad enough, the materials also urge students, parents and

(**Snitch** continued on page 6)

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Our Little Secrets

Morris Dees' New Scam

Here at CounterPunch we have long regarded Morris Dees and his Southern Poverty Law Center as collectively one of the greatest frauds in American life. We laid out our reasons some years ago: a relentless fundraising machine devoted to terrifying its mostly low-income contributors into unbelting ill-spared dollars year after year to an organization that now has an endowment of over $100 million, with very little to show for it beyond hysterical bulletins designed to raise money on the proposition that only the SPLC can stop Nazism and the KKK from siezing power.

Dees has always been a predator of opportunity, alert to exploit the paranoias of the hour. Now listen to the latest twist in Dees's pandering to the concerns of state power..

In its most recent Intelligence Report newsletter, the SPLC puts forth the preposterous theory that so far from being a glorious renaissance of the radical spirit in American political life, the WTO protest was the nexus for a far flung crypto-fascist conspiracy comprised of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan members and other shock troops of the Far Right. The SPLC's anonymous writer confidently states that the anarchists, socialists, environmentalists, and other left-wing dissidents who gathered in Seattle were secretly infiltrated by "European-style Third Position" fascists who mix racism with environmentalism. "Right alongside the 'progressive' groups that demonstrated in Seattle - mostly peaceful defenders of labor, the environment, animal rights and similar causes - were the hard-edged soldiers of neofascism", the newsletter excitedly warns. No documentation is offered to substantiate this allegation and the phrase "Third Position" scarcely encourages confidence in the analysis, since it seems to be an echo of the "Third Way", a phrase thrust into currency by salesfolk of Euro-Clintonism. The SPLC's newsletter doesn't name a single right winger who has infiltrated Direct Action, Food Not Bombs, Greenpeace or any of the other groups which organized the Seattle protests. Dees's pretense is that he stands for civil rights, but of course the newsletter entirely ignores the civil rights abuses committed by the Seattle police against the protesters, even though the ACLU has filed a civil rights suit over the "no protest zone" declared by city officials.

This is not the first time that the SPLC has covered for government thuggery. It has consistently portrayed Randy Weaver as a racist hick, thus undercutting liberal outrage at the government's violations of Weaver's constitutional rights. Dees attacked the Alabama militia group which documented racist activities at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' annual "Good Ol' Boy Roundup" in 1995. The SPLC has also worked hard to steer liberals away from the Waco controversy. After the film "Waco: Rules of Engagement" exposed the many abuses perpetrated against the Branch Davidians by the BATF and FBI, a 1998 issue of the SPLC's Intelligence Report dismissed it as a hoax. "In reality, this 'documentary' is little more than propaganda", the newsletter falsely proclaimed.

But the attack on the anti-globalization movement marks a significant shift in the SPLC's politics, suggesting to us that Dees sees significant material opportunity in attacking a popular radical cause. As part of its scorched earth policy, the organization has declared war against grass roots environmental activists. "They pine for nations of peasant-like folk tied closely to the land and to their neighbors", the newsletter observes disdainfully (though it could conceivably have picked up the idiom from Doug Henwood, whose Left Business Observer similarly stigmatizes radicals with cauterizing quotemarks and other snootinness from New York's upper west side). The SPLC's newsletter continues: "They reject rationalism in favor of a kind of mystical spirituality."

The newsletter went out a little more than one month before the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are scheduled to meet in Washington DC, where protesters will once again face the police power of the New World Order. The same coalition which shut down the WTO in Seattle are planning similar protests for the April 9 to 17 gatherings.

Gore's Debts to Richardson and Coelho

Among those under consideration for the veep spot on the Gore ticket is rotund Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson. With the exception of a trace of Hispanic ancestry, Richardson might not appear to have too many qualifications for the slot. A disaster as Ambassador to the UN, in his present post he has presided over rocketing gas prices. He does however have one valuable asset: the power to keep secret some crucial documents relating to Al Gore, Occidental Petroleum, Tony Coelho, and the curious sale of the Elk Hills naval petroleum reserve.

CounterPunch readers were the first to learn that Al Gore had succeeded where the administration of Warren Harding had failed in privatising Elk Hills, the huge oil field outside Bakersfield, California, set aside long ago as a strategic reserve for the US Navy. Back in the Harding days, interior secretary Albert Fall went to prison for taking a $300,000 bribe to approve the sale of US naval reserve oil to Edward Doheny and Harry Sinclair. For sixty years, lingering recollections of Teapot Dome remained strong enough to stymie attempted raids on the military's largest strategic fuel reserve. Nixon tried to sell it, so did Reagan, but each time congress turned them down. But Al Gore was pledged to "re-invent government" and in 1996, an item in the Defense Au-

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Published twice monthly except August - 22 issues a year.

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The Encycopedia
Vaccination (Jenner)
Political Economy (Smith, Say)
Washington
Magnetism
The Steam Engine (Watt)
Phrenology (Gall)
Napoleon!!!

The exclamation marks may have been due to news of Louis Napoleon's triumph in the French Presidential elections. It concludes that 'revolution, revolution and the grave, that is the life of man. The age of reason, different in each one, is the root of this revolution'. Notwithstanding its confidence in the march of progress *El Artista* was shortly closed down by the colonial authorities. But the Cuban dedication to revolution was in its infancy and was to be tempered in the course of a sustained succession of conflicts, the Ten Years War (1868-78), the Small War (1879), the War of 1895-8, the Revolution of 1933 and the Revolution of 1959, to pick out just the high-points. This powerful national tradition still legitimates the caudillo of the Revolution today.

While the battle over Elian may have rallied support for Castro, what of the future? The sad story of the boy is, after all, ultimately of limited scope. A friend tells me that Cuba no longer aspires to offer a model, conditions are too difficult for that, but it does represent a hold-out against US hegemony and the neo-liberal order. It can still help others break loose, like the Venezuela of Hugo Chavez.

The poignancy of the demonstration by Cuban women on the Malecon on January 14th - or that by multitudinous young people the next day - was that it seemed like a brave yet doomed attempt to defy the inevitable. Even if Elian is returned the distinctive way of life which his loss evidently dramatises for these people cannot survive. It scarcely needs the tattered posters reading 'Socialismo o Muerte' to remind one that Cuba's proclaimed social priorities run against the grain of the new global order. Even dedicated supporters of the Revolution will concede that once Fidel goes the collectivist regime will be robbed of its most important guarantee. 'We have a monarch who protects the people but once he goes the gangsters and carpet-baggers will take over'. Many Cubans know Russia and they know what has happened there.

All the same, one scarcely needs to note the forest of little paper flags on sticks waved by the demonstrators to spot the nationalist element in the reaction to the Elian affair but I soon conclude that there is something else too. The size and tenor of the demonstrations reflect an accord between the regime and a sizeable social layer, seemingly a majority. Elian, it is said repeatedly, will be safe and well-cared for. He will be able to get the best education free of charge and live in a country which, with all its difficulties, still has hope. Young people say about the demos that for the first time they can experience something like the historic confrontations of their parent's generation. They are defending, they say, Cuban dignity and sovereignty.

The fact that the regime retains its effectiveness and a social base makes it stronger than the administrations of the late-Soviet period. I put it to a dissident adviser that the Cuban army was far more formidable than the armed forces in Hungary or Bulgaria; unlike the Russian army it had suffered no equivalent to the Afghan defeat. He surprised me by readily agreeing. The Cuban armed forces were, he declared, notable for their pragmatism and would opt for further and decisive instalments of market reform. Now in his early sixties he had served at middle levels in the state apparatus. He had always found Raul Castro, he told me, someone more interested in results than in ideology. Raul Castro is minister of the armed forces and, since he is ten years younger than Fidel, often reckoned likely to play a key role in the succession. However, Raul does not possess his brother's charisma and is usually judged to be a 'hard-liner', whatever that may mean, so this assessment from a dissident - or at least someone known for publicly supporting and advising the dissidents - was surprising, to say the least, though also, perhaps, as acute as it was unexpected.

It should be explained that my interlocutor's background was distinctive. As a young man he had been a leading member of the youth organization of the PSP, Cuba's official Communist Party prior to 1959. He had become disenchanted with the economic romanticism of Cuba's policies in the sixties and attracted to the reforms proposed by Soviet economists like Liberman. Che Guevara was admirable as a human being, he told me, but his influence on Cuban economic policy had been disastrous. Now it was necessary to try to save what was valuable in the social order - above all the educational and health achievements - but to embrace market reforms and democracy.

"Che Guevara was admirable as a human being, he told me, but his influence on Cuban economic policy had been disastrous."

The imprisonment of dissidents aside, there are also other signs of the high cost of a revolutionary dictatorship, the most obvious of which is the awful quality of the Cuban press. The US embargo, and the conspiracies of the emigres and their CIA sponsors have always helped to create a siege atmosphere, a sort of semi-rational paranoia. While this has generated repression and conformity it has not staunched the deeper wellsprings of cultural creativity. Indeed there is an extra dimension of experience and knowledge to the work of the younger generations of writers and artists which almost certainly owes something to the distinctive tensions of their homeland. Today many of these, lacking outlets and opportunities have found work abroad, though they often do not represent exile as a political act. The Havana Biennale has helped to launch the international reputation of a remarkable new generation of artists from the spanish caribbean - the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico as well as Cuba.

Before my visit I mentioned to a friend who had just returned a report that the Governor of Illinois had been to Havana with a large commercial delegation. Didn't this augur a potential détente, I asked? 'Its a race between that and meltdown of the regime', he replied. My visit persuaded me that meltdown is not imminent. Everyone seems agreed that the economy picked up in 1999, with strong earnings from tourism, oil output up, and some recovery in the sugar harvest. And I had seen that many still felt that they had something to defend. **CP**

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(**Snitch** continued from page 1)

teachers to report "anything else harmful to you or your school".

WAVE America was unveiled by Governor Hunt on February 10, 2000. The announcement set off a small protest in North Carolina. One resident, Dave Komenas, set up an Internet website with a petition opposing the program. "It's based on the principles of the Hitler Youth groups," says Komenas, who describes himself as a patriot. "If you tell kids to snitch on one another, they'll eventually be asked to snitch on their parents. Read your history. In Germany in 1939, the Nazis told the kids to tattle on one another, and then on their parents." Komenas says his website collected hundreds of signatures within the first few weeks alone. He also received hundreds of e-mails from people who said they opposed the program, but didn't want to list their names on the petition for "security reasons".

Komanes is right when he thinks the WAVE program could prompt children to snitch on the parents. This has repeatedly happened during the government's War on Drugs. The journalist James Bovard examined this problem in his 1999 book "Freedom in Chains" when he looked at the federally-subsidized Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, taught to 25 million American children each year. As Bovard discovered, "The core of DARE consists of police in the classroom as role models and trusted confidants. As a result, some children have concluded from this training that becoming a government informant is the apex of virtue. One lesson that police give students in kindergarten through fourth grade stresses DARE's 'Three R's': 'Recognize, Resist, and Report.' The official 'DARE Officer's Guide for Grades K-4' contains a worksheet that instructs children to 'Circle the names of the people you could tell if... a friend finds some pills'; 'Police' are listed along with 'Mother or Father,' 'Teacher,' and 'Friend'. The next exercise instructs children to check boxes for whom they should inform if they 'are asked to keep a secret' - 'Police' are again listed as an option.

According to a federal Bureau of Justice Assistance report, many students who receive DARE training have turned their parents into the police. As the report put it, "Students occasionally tell the officer about... relatives who use drugs. As a result of children turning informant, parents have been jailed, jobs have been lost, and families have been destroyed." Even the courts are alarmed by this practice. In a 1997 case brought by a Searsport, Maine student, a federal judge found that a DARE officer lied to and threatened an 11-year-old girl in order to force her to incriminate her parents. The judge said the officer's actions were "contemptible and exceeds all notions of fair play and decency" and "strikes at the basic fabric of all parent-child relationships: love, trust and faith."

Schools administrators have always monitored their students, of course, opening files and tracking their social behavior from the first grade to graduation. But the Columbine killings prompted schools to create formal snitch programs at the urgng of the federal government. Within hours of the tragedy, Clinton went on national radio and encouraged students across the country to report any classmates suspected of engaging in anti-social behavior. A few days later, he spoke to students at a suburban Washington DC high school, urging them not to worry about being labeled tattletales for turning in fellow classmates.

"It's based on the Hitler Youth groups. If you tell kids to snitch on one another, they'll eventually be asked to snitch on their parents."

In North Carolina, Governor Jim Hunt responded to the Columbine shootings by appointing a special Governor's Task Force on Youth Violence and School Safety. It reported back in August 1999, calling for a state-wide, toll-free telephone tip line. Hunt solicited proposals from several companies which already operated such lines for private businesses. According to press aide Reid Hartzoge, he chose the Pinkerton Support Group because it offered the most comprehensive package. "We approached a number of companies about the tipline, and Pinkerton was the only one which offered to do everything", she says. PSG is a division of Pinkerton Incorporated, the private security firm founded in 1850 by Allan Pinkerton. In 1999, Pinkerton became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Securitas AB, a global security firm based in Stockholm, Sweden.

PSG is not the first private organization to offer snitch lines in the public schools. Over 2,000 school districts across the country currently contract for such services with Security Voice Inc., a private company based in Columbus, Ohio. In addition, some schools use lines sponsored by Scholastic Crime Stoppers, an affiliate of Crime Stoppers Incorporated, a non-profit organization which offers rewards of up to $1,000 for tips. Some districts also use lines operated by law enforcement agencies, such as the Kansas Highway Patrol, which services that state's schools. But, many of these lines are mere record-a-phones. Tips are not transcribed until hours after the come in, and are only faxed-not phoned-to the appropriate officials.

Without a doubt, the WAVE America program being tested in North Carolina is the most elaborate informant program ever marketed to the public schools. It is being promoted as aggressively as Pokeman trading cards, with brochures, posters, t-shirts and a colorful Internet website designed to attract children and teenagers. The promotional materials were designed by PSG in cooperation with the Center for the Prevention of School Violence, a state-funded think tank headquartered at North Carolina State University. Among other things, the Center provides conflict-resolution services to the state's schools and serves as the national clearinghouse for Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), a student organization which promotes nonviolence on school campuses in 22 states. All schools which sign up for the WAVE America program are supplied with plastic, wallet-sized cards for each student with the tipline phone number, 1-888-960-9600. The schools are also supplied with brochures on the program for every student and their parents.

Both the card and the brochures include lists of "warning signs" which allegedly precede violent incidents. They were drawn from research conducted by the Center for the Prevention of School Violence and various federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education. Several of the "warning signs" are beyond dispute, such as "weapons at school," "detailed threats of lethal violence," "severe rage for seemingly minor reasons" and "other self-injurous behavior or threats of suicide". Most of the "warning signs"

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thorization Act under Gore's auspices finally approved the sale of Elk Hills to private interests. Various oil companies savored the prospect of acquiring this immense prize.

In 1998, Occidental Petroleum emerged as the lucky winner, buying 78% of Elk Hills for $3.65 billion — the largest privatization in US history. Normally, the Department of Energy would have been responsible for examining whether the sale of this important national asset was in the best interests of the country. But the DOE was absolved from this task in a manner that has escaped the attention of some recent news stories on the Elk Hills scandal. Instead of DOE Gore arranged for the consulting firm ICF Kaiser International to assess the sale. The chairman of ICF Kaiser was none other than master-fixer Tony Coelho, friend of Al and current overseer of the Gore presidential campaign. ICF Kaiser delivered a wholehearted and unqualified certification of the deal.

Acquisition of Elk Hills was vital for Occidental and its chairman, Ray Irani. Low in oil reserves, Occidental had previously been viewed as heading for ruin, but the Elk Hills deal tripled its holdings at a stroke, leading to a gratifying reversal in the company's fortunes. Although the bidding on the government asset had been conducted on the presumption that Elk Hills oil would cost $4.50 a barrel to extract, Occidental was soon pulling it out of the ground for a sensationally profitable $1.50 a barrel in extraction costs. It did not take long for ugly talk to swirl around the oil industry that the auction had not been conducted on a level playing field. A full review of the documents relating to the sale could settle such unworthy suspicions, but these same documents are in the custody of the Department of Energy, and Secretary Richardson has obdurately refused to release them.

Occidental chairman Irani has been hailed for his perspicacity in acquiring the Elk Hills reserve, but the $470,000 he has contributed in soft money to Clinton, Gore and the Democratic Party since 1972 is plainly no less shrewd an investment. Refreshment of the Gore family coffers is an old and hallowed tradition at Occidental. The late Occidental chairman Armand Hammer began the practice when he befriended then Congressman Albert Gore Sr, father of our beloved Vice President,

Bill Richardson does have one prime asset: the power to keep secret documents relating to Al Gore, Occidental Petroleum, Tony Coelho, and the Elk Hills reserve.

back in the 1940s and put him on the payroll of his cattle business. As Gore Sr moved to the Senate, the relationship blossomed. In the 1960s, Hammer bought a farm in Tennessee, which held a zinc ore deposit and promptly sold the farm to Gore Sr., negotiating a deal in which Occidental mined the zinc, paying $20,000 a year for the concession. Soon after, Gore Sr. sold the land to young Al for $140,000 — $20,000 less than Occidental originally paid for the land. Although another company eventually bought the rights, Gore Jr. still receives $20,000 a year from the concession. In 1971, when Gore Sr. left the Senate, he was hired to chair an Occidental subsidiary for $500,000 a year. Hammer told anyone who would listen that he had the older Gore (who was instrumental in putting a stop to an FBI investigation into Hammer's shady Soviet connections) in his "back pocket".

Young Al's Occidental connections do not appear to have been so personally lucrative, although, as executor of his father's estate, he controls $500,000 of the company's stock. He therefore has a fiduciary responsibility to keep an eye on such Occidental operations as the present extensive drilling program in the country of the U'wa people in Colombia. The U'wa are deeply opposed to their ancestral territory being despoiled by Occidental, and are threatening to starve themselves to death if the plan goes ahead. Occidental stockholders can only hope that the torrent of military hardware now being funneled to Colombia by the Clinton-Gore Administration will put paid to such obstructionism once and for all.

MEET CUR DELEON, COHEN'S SUCCESSOR?

Friends of CounterPunch warn that we should steel ourselves for the installation of Rudy DeLeon as Secretary of Defense before the year is out. Deleon's humble beginnings were as an aide on the House Armed Services Committee to Massachusetts Congressman Nick Mavroulis, (known to colleagues as "Nick the Cat — More shit than sand"). Back then he was content to be known as "Deleeon. Latterly, as he rose to high office, he has intimated a preference for "DeLayon", conjuring up pleasing implications of an aristocratic French lineage. Most recently he has been serving as Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, his tenure marked by a headlong fall in the readiness of our military to fight (unworkably complex equipment, lack of spare parts, inadequate training, etc) and an increasing exodus by experienced soldiers, sailors and airmen. DeLeon has consequently been rewarded for his efforts with a promotion to Deputy Secretary of Defense, vacated by John Hamre, who has secured a comfortable berth as threat inflator in chief at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. However, we are now reliably informed that Defense Secretary William Cohen, who has fought the easy fight of jacking up arms spending to the satisfaction of all concerned, is himself on the hunt for a job, which means that DeLeon could step into his shoes in the sunset months of the Clinton era. CountePunch readers in the general officer corps need not be alarmed. Rudy has let it be known that he has no higher aim than to be known as a "graceful administrator" respectful of the "coordination process". A Counterpunch friend has helpfully supplied us with a translation: "Rubber stamp anything the generals and contractors put in front of you, and they will love you." So successfully has Rudy fulfilled this mission in the past that the United States Air Force has granted him one of the highest honors it is in its power to bestow. On the menu of the (heavily subsidized) senior air force officers' Pentagon restaurant there is the "Rudy DeLeon", a sandwich named in honor of their hero. **CP**

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Robin Blackburn concludes his journey

Cuba at the Millennium

State enterprise is ubiquitous in Cuba but not always easy to spot. Coming over on the Cubana flight we had been treated to a video extolling the virtues of the Gaviota tour company. The video portrayed a crowd of casually-attired young men and women clambering on a truck and dancing to a pulsating sound track of Cuban son and salsa, with a black youth supplying a vigorous rap-style commentary and invitation, as the vehicle careered through the streets of a Cuban town out into the country.

Once in Havana I was to see that this omnipresent tour company offered trips in air-conditioned Mercedes buses to coastal resorts, flights in a helicopter or power-boat fishing in the Gulf Stream. I was later told that the company is owned by the Cuban armed forces. I also learnt that all those dollar shops are state-owned too. Sooner or later all the convertible currency returns to the state which uses its huge commercial revenues to fund its other activities. In a world of globalization where states find it more difficult to tax, the profits of well-run state enterprise can be a vital element in state revenue.

Cuban public enterprises seek to beguile those with dollars, so the implications are mixed, but they are still linked to the internal economy. Cigars, coffee and rum are not only attractively-packaged but their sale to tourists and to overseas buyers is promoted by slick advertising. CDs of Cuban music are available, though in my opinion the marketing people have made an error here in setting prices at $16 a disc.

We didn't believe that tourism was good for economic development in the sixties but evidence from Italy and Spain contradicts this. In Cuba, so far as I can calculate, the establishment of the tourist centers uses a lot of imported equipment - down to refrigerators and TV sets in each hotel bedroom - but their running uses mainly Cuban labor and food, with a spin-off demand for handicrafts and luxury products. Although foreign (European and Canadian) firms play a big part in running the tour packages, the involvement of state enterprises is considerable. If they want, visitors can stay and eat in private houses, which spreads the tourist dollar and encourages the back-packers.

If the state plays a useful role in marketing and supply it also surrounds the direct producer or supplier with invigilation, harassment and control. State farms and cooperatives furnish basic rations to the ministry but farmers complain at excessive regulation. Small producers attract official suspicion. In Havana jealous officials try to make sure that the palardar, the private restaurants, do not serve lobster or exceed the statutory maximum of customers. A friend complains that establishments that are too successful can be closed down. And evidently there is scope here for petty corruption.

In old Havana one is struck by a number of very sensitively-executed restorations of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings. One can still enjoy the patina of the past without the too-even, stripped-down quality of sand-blasted restoration. These works of restoration are directed by the 'Historian of the City', a man called Leal who has employed UNESCO sponsorship as well as enjoying government backing. Next door to his office is a state-run bookshop where I find that Cuba still has a reasonable output of historical and literary works. But for those after bargains the pavement book-sellers have an extraordinary selection. I find one book-seller near the Copelia who tells me he has a stock of 13,000 titles and who displays good judgement when finding studies I might want.

I give a lecture at an institute charged with maintaining the level of cultural and political awareness and am reminded of a visit a few years ago to the run-down premises of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Beijing, dwarfed by neighboring skyscrapers. The Cuban centre is also obviously short of resources and staffed by the more dedicated and idealistic, all this in contrast to, say, the facilities aimed at tourists.

These people are enthusiasts for the writings of Antonio Gramsci. I am told about the difficulty of stimulating civil society and about the redoubts of dogmatism which discredit and impede a creative Marxist approach. Nevertheless these people still exist and are rooted in Cuban culture. On a grass bank opposite the Institute a group of a dozen or so young people are going through the rituals of a complicated new collective dance and I am told that it is all the rage just now. I am also told that there are quite a few unofficial reviews now published by experimental young writers.

In my lecture I report an amusing finding I have made at the National Library while sifting through nineteenth century papers. I have come across copies of a journal published in Havana in 1848-9 called *El Artista, publicacion amena, oficial del Liceo Artistico y Literario*. The journal was handsomely printed and illustrated, with reproductions of famous pictures and portraits of Byron, Verdi, Alexandre Dumas and Richard Cobden. There are articles on educational and cultural topics, and on methods for improving agriculture. An editorial of the issue for 15 October 1848 entitled 'The Old World and the Modern World' declares that man, like God, is now able to create a new world, he has conquered distance, harnessed steam and can compete with the speed of sea-birds and the swiftest beasts of the forest. There are advertisements for sewing machines and other new-fangled appliances, and for restaurants, one of them called Free Trade. But what really catches my eye is the editorial for 7 January 1849 entitled 'Everything is Revolution', with its schema of world history laid out in a column to demonstrate the unfolding of the revolutionary principle thus:

Decadence of the Roman Empire
The Crusades (Batillon)
Gun Powder (Schwartz)
Witchcraft (Gioja)
Printing Press (Gutenberg)
Luther
England in the Seventeenth Century
France in the Eighteenth Century

"We didn't believe that tourism was good for economic development in the sixties but evidence from Italy and Spain contradicts this."

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The brochures also feature "warning signs" which seem designed to determine whether any parents are outside the political mainstream.

listed on the card and in the brochures are less alarming, however. They include such routine adolescent behavior as "social withdrawal", "feelings of being picked on and made fun of", "low school interest and poor academic performance", and "expression of violence in writings and drawings". The card and brochures also urge students, parents and teachers to report alcohol and drug use, crimes for minors which can result in suspensions or expulsions.

Ever since the Oklahoma City bombing, the federal government has been on the lookout for right-wing anti-government extremists with guns. These "warning signs" seem designed to identify their children. In addition to the cards and brochures, all schools which sign up for the WAVE America program will be supplied with a 3 X 4 foot acrylic "Awareness Center" for displaying the program materials, along with a series of posters describing the "warning signs" of violence and periodic bulletins updating the program. The information in the brochures is repeated on the WAVE America Internet website, www.waveamerica.com. The site, also developed by PSG, repeats all of the information from the brochures, including the broadly-written list of "warning signs" of potential violence. The website also includes a number of features designed to attract children and teenagers, including free e-mail accounts, an opportunity to win a free computer, movie reviews, book recommendations and links to non-profit organizations offering college scholarships.

The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission allocated $205,000 to the Center for the Prevention of School Violence to start up the program. PSG plans to raise all of the other money for the program from private corporations, however. The private funding will allow PSG to offer the WAVE America program to all school districts across the country free of charge. Although director Park says there is no firm time schedule, the program could conceivably go national within the next few months.

So what's wrong with the WAVE America program? Especially in the light of the Columbine killings, shouldn't school and law enforcement officials use every tool at their disposal to prevent school violence? Yes, if they actually work. But the truth is, for all the publicity it receives, school violence is very rare. Less than one percent of all murders in the country occur on school property. Children are far more likely to be killed at home by their parents. "Studies show that people think most kids [who are killed] are killed by other kids," says Joan Ziendenberg, policy analyst at the Justice Policy Institute in Washington, DC. "In reality, less than three percent of kids are killed by other kids. Most are killed by their own guardians." More than that, violent crime has been going down, not up, in recent years. Even more to the point, crime dropped farther among juveniles than adults. Juvenile arrests for serious and violent crimes fell nearly 11 percent from 1997 to 1998, doubling the 5.4 percent decline for adults. Although juvenile crime had been dropping steadily since 1993, federal officials say this was the most significant decrease in recent years.

In the weeks following the Columbine killings, the media was full of stories about students across the country who were arrested for planning similar attacks. But, as it turned out, most of these plots were little more than hot air. The simple truth is, the vast majority of the students punished during the post-Columbine crackdown didn't do anything wrong-or, at least, anything serious. Approximately two weeks after the shootings, Joshua Mortimer, a high school student in Wilmington, North Carolina was expelled for a year for leaving the message "The End Is Near" on a school computer screen. Although Mortimer said the message was a joke about potential Year 2000 problems, he spent three nights in jail and was eventually convicted by a state district court judge of making a threat. Three weeks after Columbine, the American Civil Liberties Union was swamped with complaints that school officials were trampling their students' constitutional rights.

Even Chicago school officials admit they went too far when a teacher called the police on a 7-year-old. On November 22, a teacher at Leif Ericson Scholastic Academy ordered the boy to sit down. He allegedly responded by threatening to get his brother to come in and shoot the teacher and classmates. The teacher called the police, who arrested the boy and charged him with aggravated assault. Paul Vallas, chief executive officer for Chicago Public Schools, told an Agence France-Presse reporter that the reaction was hysterical. "He didn't have a weapon, he wasn't threatening and he had explained to the school principal that he was not serious," Vallas said. "A child that young doesn't even know what he is saying." Despite the protest, the police refused to drop the charges.

Stomping in a puddle got a 12-year-old arrested in Florida in December. Kyle Fredrikson was walking back to class from lunch when he splashed water on several classmates and a sheriff's deputy who was working at the school that day. The deputy took the sixth-grader to a school office where the boy was handcuffed, put in a patrol car, taken to jail and charged with disruption of an educational institution, a misdemeanor. He was released to the custody of his mother and grandmother about two hours later. His parents, Chuck and Brenda Fredrikson, were livid. "The in-

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mates had access to him. Can you imagine that for stomping in a mud puddle?" said his father.

One of the most ridiculous incidents occured on January 5 when Sarah Boman was expelled from her Missouri high school for an art project. The 17-year-old Boman was a model student who had been awarded two art scholarships to local colleges. At the suggestion of one of her college art instructors, Bowman did a painting intended to depict the inner turmoil of a fictional madman. It featured dozens of psychotic-sounding phrases, included the words "I'll kill you all." She was expelled after the principle saw the painting posted at the school. "Clearly, this is an overreaction to the Columbine school shootings," said Dick Kurtenbach, executive director for the American Civil Liberties Union in Kansas City, which filed a federal lawsuit on Boman's behalf. "What's important about this case, is that when she made this particular piece of artwork, it never crossed her mind that she would be expelled from school. If we are going to expect our public school students to consider in this creative process, 'Is this going to lead to my expulsion?' then we have done serious damage to the creative process for students in public schools."

And then there's the question of what happens to the records generated by the calls to the WAVE Line. In this day of computer databases, electronic files last forever and can be sent around the world in a matter of seconds. Electronic files held by private companies and schools are secret-their subjects have no right to see them, no opportunity to correct them. Nowadays, a false or unfounded accusation can follow an individual for their entire life. And each call to the WAVE Line results in the creation of multiple files-files which may never be corrected or purged.

The files retained by PSG are especially tricky. The Pinkerton company offers many services to large employers, including background checks on potential workers. If WAVE America goes according to plan, PSG will soon have a large

Josh Mortimer was expelled for leaving "The End Is Near" on a school computer.

and growing database on alleged troublemakers. What's to stop the company from including these files in its background checks, even if the allegations were false or eventually proven to be unfounded?

A month after the WAVE America program was announced in North Carolina, the calls are just beginning to trickle in. PSG program administrator Heather Newman says most of them have come from parents. "Most of them have called up to report verbal threats and bullying aimed at their children"' she says. "One of them was about potential gang activity". Newman guesses that the parents learned about the line from the media coverage of Governor Jim Hunt's press conference. She believes students will start calling as the schools begin distributing the instructional brochures and plastic cards with the WAVE Line phone number. As the program gears up, PSG administrators are busy recruiting corporate sponsors for their program. International Paper has already contributed to the cost of producing the brochures, and negotiations are currently underway with banks and other businesses for the rest of the money. Potential sponsors are being promised banner ads on the WAVE America website, which program director Tamara Park describes as "market branding." According to Parks, if things go according to plan, students will soon be able to use their plastic WAVE America cards for discounted merchandise from the corporate sponsors. Parks says brightly the discount program will turn the cards into what she terms "loyalty cards." **CP**

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